

LOGISTICS IN SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE: SUSTAINABLE PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

LOGISTICS IN SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE: SUSTAINABLE PARTNER DEVELOPMENT, by J. Troy Fisher, 58 pages.

The United States is increasingly seeking engagement with friendly nations on a global scale to support political, economic, and military reform with the intent of maintaining global influence concurrent with stabilizing troubled areas of the world. Under the umbrella of security assistance, security force assistance is one method that the Department of Defense uses to execute this American foreign assistance policy. Insight from the past in conjunction with the tools that doctrine provides can enable lasting rather than transient effects.

Historical security force assistance efforts provide insight to planned efforts; this monograph draws on experiences in Korea and Vietnam to show that efforts in training logistics when partnering with foreign security forces will help achieve effects that are more durable. The ways advisors were trained and organized, as well as the manner on which they accepted their duties, are instructive to future efforts. American advisors should seek not only to increase the capabilities of the foreign security forces, but also their capacity to self-sustain.

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ACRONYMS

DOD	Department of Defense
FSF	Foreign Security Forces
JCISFA	Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance
KMAG	U.S Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea
MAAG-V	Military Advisory and Assistance Group, Vietnam
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
OTERA	Organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
WWII	World War II

INTRODUCTION

As a new generation across the Middle East and North Africa demands their universal rights, we are supporting political and economic reform and deepening partnerships to ensure regional security.

—President Barack Obama, *Defense Strategic Guidance – Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*

The United States is increasingly seeking engagement with friendly nations on a global scale to support political, economic, and military reform with the intent of maintaining global influence concurrent with stabilizing troubled areas of the world. While this participation comes in myriad forms, security force assistance (SFA) is a significant method for the Department of Defense (DOD) to accomplish the guidance of the President. Defined as “action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host-nation, or regional security forces in support of legitimate authority,” SFA is thus a subset of whole-of-government efforts. As a military contribution to these efforts, the conduct of SFA is a way to relate tactical action to national and strategic contexts.

Long-term solutions for building partner capacity must include improvement in ability to provide sustainable effects. Given that SFA will continue to be an essential part of American security cooperation efforts with our regional partners, it is important to examine how American military trainers can incorporate sustainment training into building partner capacities, while ensuring that those actions aligned with the identified strategic needs. Examining historical SFA efforts can provide relevant observations with which to assess current SFA efforts and provide lessons for future efforts.

A dominant factor in how our contributions transcend a physical presence by the American military centers on how well our partners learn to provide for themselves logistically. Developing a partner security force with equipment and training will result in very little long-term effect without appropriate mechanisms to ensure durable effects. Attention such as this will

subsequently degrade national desire to conduct military operations geared towards prevention of future conflict.

The Army has fully adopted the idea of engagement with other countries, as evidenced by the Chief of Staff of the Army guidance in his *Strategic Priorities* published in October of 2013. General Odierno emphasizes that the Army will “shape and set theaters for regional commanders employing unique Total Army characteristics and capabilities to influence the security environment, build trust, develop relationships, and gain access through rotational forces, multilateral exercises, mil-to-mil engagements, coalition training, and other opportunities.”¹ These efforts can make a significant impact if done with the intent to produce lasting rather than transitory effects.

Historical examples of SFA in Korea and Vietnam provide useful analogies of how logistics can better inform ongoing and planned efforts to increase partner logistical capacity simultaneously with combat skills. The purpose of this paper is to gather observations from the past that better inform the future. Each conflict provides specific areas that can be instructive to planners of future efforts. Korea demonstrates the need to ensure logistics force structure is paired with that of the combat formations, and Vietnam shows the dangers of advisors taking too prominent of a role in the success of partner foreign security forces (FSF).

This study will examine these cases in detail with a focus on logistics development in Korea and Vietnam. Each case study assesses the strategic setting and desired end states, how American forces organized themselves to accomplish the mission, how logistic capabilities were developed, the challenges encountered by advisors, and a general discussion of the outcomes of the effort. Since cultural considerations are central to SFA operations and will continue to play a

¹General Raymond Odierno, *CSA Strategic Priorities: October 2013* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 16, 2013), 6.

significant role in future American efforts, the evaluation of these two cases incorporates the impacts of culture on the relationship between advisor and partner within each study area.

Next, the paper will examine the lessons gained from the two case studies within the context of potential future SFA operations. Understanding that Geographic Combatant Commanders and the Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations create the requirements for foreign assistance provides context to how capable partners contribute to the overall improved conditions within their geographic locations and regional engagement strategies.

The Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) is the organization charged with integrating the DOD efforts and exists to “support the integration of Security Force Assistance (SFA) capabilities into the current and future Joint Force in order to advance joint warfighting capability.”² Within their scope of duties, JCISFA advocates several helpful frameworks to assist with the integration of historical analysis with current efforts. A useful model is the organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise (OTERA) model, as found in the *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance*. While not officially defined in the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13 establishes that the OTERA model assists planners in determination of “which OTERA tasks will be required to build the proper capability and capacity levels within the various units of the FSF.”³ Other useful terminology for relating tactical actions to strategic end states are the eight principles of sustainment, which are: integration, anticipation, responsiveness, simplicity, economy, survivability, continuity, and improvisation. The OTERA model and eight principles of

²Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, “About JCISFA,” JCISFA, <https://jcisfa.jcs.mil/Public/WhoIsJCISFA.aspx> (accessed October 22, 2013).

³Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Print Office, 2013), III-9.

sustainment provide the foundation for examination of the case studies in the pages that follow.

Terms associated with each are further defined as necessary throughout the text.

Emphasis on SFA by the government is not without controversy. This paper will examine SFA within the context that SFA is a mandate from the President and will avoid concerns voiced by some that the military is exceeding its charter in the development of the security capabilities of other nations. It is useful, however, to acknowledge that detractors of American efforts abroad could categorize those efforts as having little ability to create long-term solutions; such attacks would likely portray SFA as an inefficient usage of resources. This is especially enticing to critics in an era where conflict has diminished in scope, and the military budget is an enticing target for spending reductions.

SFA is a critical tool in the American foreign policy kit bag. Ensuring that future efforts are informed by history, theory, doctrine, and current practice is of paramount importance to FSF development. The creation of self-reliant partners has not always been achieved, but reconciliation of planned efforts with historical cases will show why we should work towards self-sustaining FSF in the future.

LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH KOREAN FORCES, 1946-1953

While not the first example of an advisory mission overseas, the American effort in the Republic of Korea (ROK) from 1946 to 1953 provides an oft-studied and relevant example of how the United States can use military capabilities to positively influence the security environment within another country. Because of the American advisory efforts, the ROK was able to form an effective and self-sustaining Army that proved itself a legitimately capable fighting force able to provide for national defense from almost nothing. To summarize the American contribution to creating a self-sustaining ROK Army (ROKA), this paper will first outline some strategic considerations that compelled American involvement on the Korean peninsula, and then address three specific themes about the effort: 1) an overview of how

American forces organized for the mission; 2) a description of the mission's objectives and how American advisors inculcated self-sustainability into their partner organizations; and 3) a discussion of the impediments encountered when seeking to bolster ROKA logistics.

Strategic Setting

The Korean peninsula experienced a tumultuous era leading up to World War II (WWII). Control of the peninsula and its people was a source of “intense rivalry” between China and Russia until Japan seized official control in 1910 and the Korean people subsequently experienced brutal oppression at the hands of the Japanese Empire.⁴ The social, economic, and religious pressure inflicted upon the Korean people caused serious disdain towards the Japanese.⁵ Even with a temporary setback in ability to influence the peninsula, the USSR never lost an interest in the region; during the later years of WWII, the United States aggressively sought Soviet involvement in the Pacific region as a mechanism to reduce American casualties in the planned attack against Japan.⁶ Included in this American planning, was a plan to create a four-party trusteeship in Korea at the end of the war, composed of the United States, USSR, Great Britain, and China. However, the rapid surrender of the Japanese following the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, coupled with a lack of coordination between the Allies for execution of Korean trusteeship, led the Soviets to rapidly enter Korea at the close of the war, followed closely by United States forces. This resulted in the ad hoc division of the Korean peninsula and changed the nature of the cooperation between the United States and USSR in Korea.

Much akin to how Europe was divided at the conclusion of WWII, the United States proposed to the USSR an administrative line at the 38th parallel in Korea to establish a temporary

⁴Dean Acheson, *The Korean War* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1971), 1.

⁵Han Woo-Keun, *The History of Korea*, ed. Grafton K. Mintz, trans. Lee Kyung-shik (Honolulu, HI: East-West Center Press, 1971), 497-499.

⁶Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (New York: Times Books, 1982), 16-22.

jurisdiction to enable the two countries to process prisoners of war and dislocated civilians.⁷ The USSR occupied the northern half of the peninsula by August 26, 1945, just 10 days after entry to Korea, and then sought to establish governance structures that were favorable to Soviet interests. The USSR felt that time was on their side, and thereby shifted their strategy to that of waiting out the American presence in Korea. The Soviet intent was to establish one independent Korea under a communist government. The Soviets underlying assumption was that they must strive for militarily superiority to any potential challenger, and that the United States was the only remaining contender.⁸

The United States had a different perspective. Having largely ignored Korea since 1905, a sudden desire to get involved on the Korean peninsula in 1945 might seem questionable, but this ignores the importance of the Pacific region to the United States that was ushered in with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Two mainstream yet opposing themes exist regarding American involvement in Korea post-WWII; one advocates Korea's importance as a buffer state from communism, and the other believes that the postwar trusteeship of Korea with the USSR served as a mechanism for cooperation. Either way, the United States had to commit resources in such a manner to avoid inciting direct confrontation with the Soviets.⁹ Once approved by Washington, DC, General MacArthur as the Commander in Chief U.S. Army Forces Pacific ordered the U.S. XXIV Corps Commander Lieutenant General John Hodge to proceed to Seoul

⁷Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 45.

⁸Acheson, 7-8.

⁹Jongsoo James Lee, *Partition of Korea after World War II: A Global History* (Gordonville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 5-17.

and Kaesong with the U.S. 7th Infantry Division. Lieutenant General Hodge had the task to “establish law and order and keep the Koreans and Japanese apart.”¹⁰

During the initial stages of the occupation, the first challenge was the lack of governmental structures to administer any sort of territory. Having been under official control of the Japanese Empire from 1910 until its collapse in 1945, very little capability existed to regulate economic policy, governance, or security mechanisms. The American government was guided by the desire to prevent interpretations by the USSR of an aggressive United States stance, and American representatives recruited a constabulary police force from the population that worked for the military government officers to prevent this.¹¹ As the effort progressed, the Koreans displayed increasing capability to provide for themselves, such that on September 11, 1946 the American military governors were ordered to “assume a strict advisory status” as opposed to actually running the government themselves.¹² The years that followed were not without issues, but the Koreans were making discernible progress towards self-determination. The American advisors started with little experience regarding occupation and governmental duties and even less experience dealing with Korean culture and language, yet they had made a good start.

Organization

As the American effort in South Korea transitioned from a constabulary and governing entity to that of an advisory role, recognition of a need to establish an effective military capable of self-defense was deemed crucial to counter various stages of rebellion, mutiny, guerrilla conflict, and ultimately direct conflict. This was done using a newly formed organization and short-lived organization called the Provisional Military Advisory Group, which existed from

¹⁰Millett, 59.

¹¹Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1962), 6-13.

¹²Ibid., 22.

August 1948 to July 1949.¹³ On July 1, 1949, the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (K MAG) was formed upon the withdrawal of the last ‘occupation’ troops, and reported to Ambassador John Muccio. Initially, K MAG was authorized 500 members and tasked to help the ROK in “developing its army, coast guard, and national police by advising, assisting, and ensuring American military assistance was used effectively.”¹⁴ The last task, that of the proper usage of military assistance, is of primary interest here.

Advisors were routinely assigned to the ROKA divisions and regiments. The intent of the program was to assign down to the battalion level, but advisor shortfalls precluded fulfillment; even the artillery and infantry battalions rarely received their full authorization of advisors.¹⁵ Logisticians were rarely assigned lower than the division level; one major was assigned to advise the G4, one captain advised ordnance functions, and 11 enlisted soldiers were assigned with duties of “mess, administration, communications, and maintenance.”¹⁶ Through it all, the K MAG was generally willing to adjust its structure as required, within its capabilities, to meet the needs of partnered Korean forces. As an example, a Director of Supply was created to handle the internal logistics functions of the advisory group so that advisors could focus on the capabilities resident to their partnered forces.¹⁷

Regarding the selection process and tour length of advisors, there was an overall attitude that advising duty was less favorable than membership in a typical unit. This notion was

¹³Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹⁴Robert D. III Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18: *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 5.

¹⁵Ibid., 11.

¹⁶Ibid., 10.

¹⁷Sawyer, 55.

reinforced by the fact that combat units frequently were prioritized higher than KMAC when resource and personnel shortfalls were evident. Tour length was calculated on a graduated point scale; the number of points required to transfer out of theater was higher than for combat-unit soldiers, with many interpreting this as an idea that the contributions of advisors were not as valuable as those in a combat unit.¹⁸ To counter this dynamic, pay and tour length were adjusted to favor the assignment.¹⁹ Merely incentivizing the duty did not ensure the success of an advisor, though.

When an advisor with the right temperament held the duty position, they generally adopted a graduated method of training such as the crawl-walk-run methodology. Advisors found that the Koreans were a willing audience when taught in this manner; advisors who were able to adopt this model into their interactions with their counterparts were generally more successful.²⁰ Another useful advisor trait was the ability to accept realities of the constraints which partners were experiencing, which allowed appropriate expectations of potential. KMAC accomplished this understanding to such an extent that immediately preceding the North Korean invasion; KMAC notified the DOD that the ROKA could “defend itself no longer than fifteen days.”²¹ When the North Koreans invaded, KMAC advisors were able to assist American policymakers with situational understanding of partner logistics status and the overall military situation. During

¹⁸Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 11-12.

¹⁹Ibid., 52.

²⁰Bryan R. Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War: The American Advisory Missions from 1946-1953* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 2004).

²¹Goulden, 34.

the ensuing conflict this proved beneficial to the ROK, the American mission in Korea, and ultimately the American government in Washington, DC.²²

KMAG Creates a Self-sustaining ROKA

Even though KMAG effectively understood the capabilities and limitations of their partners, and the ROKA were receptive to American assistance, the Korean desire to increase operational reach capabilities was incremental and lagging. This differential in the creation of fighting and sustainment capabilities provides an important lesson to future generations of planners, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to advising duties. Despite this imbalance in ROKA's development, KMAG was largely successful in organizing, training, equipping, and building a self-sustaining Korean force.

As previously mentioned, the Koreans started from very little capacity or capability in their journey towards the establishment of a security apparatus, and the American advisors proved their worth in this venture. Largely because of the drawdown from WWII, the U.S. Army equipping strategy in the Pacific relied heavily upon leftover material from WWII. Given the moniker "Roll-Up," the operation obtained abandoned military equipment for the Pacific theater and had an unintended yet positive second order effect: the logistical infrastructure to support combat was already in place when North Korea attacked on the June 25, 1950.²³ After the initial shock and tactical humiliations of the North Korean invasion, the KMAG set to work to overhaul the ROKA. Results were not immediate, but by the winter of 1952, the changes were dramatic and the ROKA displayed a new ability to fight "violent and extensive" battles when required.²⁴

²²Glen D. Paige, *The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1968); James A. Huston, *Guns and Butter, Powder and Rice: U.S. Army Logistics in the Korean War* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1989).

²³James F. Schnabel, CMH Pub 20-1-1, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1972), 59-60.

²⁴Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 9.

In order to make this transformation, the KMAC acknowledged that the organizational structures of the technical services of quartermaster and ordnance were “the weakest segment of the Korean Army” and routinely received less effort than other functions.²⁵ To prevent failure as the ROKA went through exponential gains in their numbers of personnel in response to the invasion, the United States temporarily accepted responsibility in July 1950 for the provision of “all classes of supply” to the ROKA.²⁶ Once the WWII surplus vehicles from Operation Roll-Up were fully integrated into the ROKA inventory, and sufficient time to learn how to operate and maintain the equipment passed, the Koreans assumed responsibility and actually became technically proficient.²⁷ KMAC also assisted in developing the ROKA transportation system, and in a very Korean way. In November 1951, KMAC recommended a significant increase to the Korean Service Corps organization, whose purpose was to relieve infantrymen of duties such as moving food, ammunition, and equipment on the battlefield. This freed combat soldiers to focus on fighting the enemy.²⁸ In the end, American advisors helped the ROK integrate in excess of \$2.4 billion worth of American logistical support into their army between June 1950 and the end of 1953.²⁹ The KMAC efforts did not stop with tactical logistics, though. Where possible, KMAC took a holistic view of improving the ROKA through focused effort at the strategic level on improving industry and manufacturing, which resulted in improved depth in sources of supply for the ROKA and a venue to bolster the nation’s economy. This, coupled with an oversight of the usage of American logistical support, set a solid cornerstone to build a self-sustaining military

²⁵Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 77.

²⁶Huston, 338.

²⁷Ibid., 338-344.

²⁸Sawyer, 182.

²⁹Huston, 345.

force. Major Robert K. Sawyer, whose account titled *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* is considered seminal to the study of the KMAG, makes the claim that “KMAG attempted to stimulate, whenever possible, ROK efforts to attain self-sufficiency.” Their efforts are largely considered successful in retrospect.³⁰

Challenges

This success was not without corresponding difficulties. Given the strategic setting and the tasks the KMAG was charged with, an outline of some challenges the advisors encountered is informative to the design of future efforts to building partner capacity. Challenges most worthy of elaboration are those of linguistic and cultural differences, the political constraints placed upon the KMAG, and the organizational and force structure evolutions that are inherent in building any new organization.

From August 1946 to June 1950, advisors relied on personal intuition to navigate ambiguous guidance about what and how to teach the ROKA, and their duties were never easy. Advising across the English-Korean language barrier accounts for much of the difficulty in the relationships, but rarely gains categorization as a catastrophic hindrance to the interaction between the soldiers. Some accounts emphasize how ROKA counterparts developed English-speaking capabilities to improve their ability to interact with the American soldiers.³¹ As with translations between all dissimilar languages, “the language barrier was a tough, but not insurmountable obstacle.”³² The differences in language are but a singular indicator of bigger differences the advisors were required to work through. Greater implications of working with

³⁰Sawyer, 185-187.

³¹Major Eldon B. Anderson, Debriefing Report No. 76, March 6, 1952, in Compilation of Post-Korea Interviews conducted by the Field Artillery School, vol. 2, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

³²Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 43.

other cultures were evident in the differences of thought processes. American advisors were initially ignorant of the “deep cultural, social, and economic differences” that motivated individual and organizational processes.³³ This ignorance was most notably manifested within the field of logistics. U.S. Army logistics doctrine outlines the concept of anticipation as a principle of sustainment as foreseeing future requirements, which is critical unless every resource is available when requested. Such anticipation required ROKA logisticians to focus on future needs, a trait that was counter to the Korean culture; Koreans were typically “reluctant to make future commitments that they might not keep” which resulted in a steeper learning curve for both the American advisors and their ROKA counterparts on how to operate an effective system.³⁴

Prior to 1950, U.S. government assistance policies placed a variety of constraints on efforts to organize, train, and equip the ROKA. General MacArthur reiterated this in a directive to ensure no appearance of threat to North Korea. ROKA could be developed to offer token resistance, but not such a robust capability as to threaten neighboring countries. North Korean forces were under no such constraints in their partnership with the USSR, having received weapons, tanks, and combat aircraft.³⁵ KMAG’s original charter was to train a ROKA of 50,000, however the actual force numbers only started there and the ROK raised the strength of the army from 65,000 to 100,000 in March 1949, and further to an official number of 250,000 in April 1951. In April 1952, the desired strength of the ROK military exceeded 400,000.³⁶ This spiraling expansion in personnel was only moderately tied to increases in logistics systems, meaning the

³³Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 31.

³⁴Ibid., 79.

³⁵Schnabel, 40.

³⁶Huston, 333-338.

already existing shortfalls in the supply system were further amplified. Leftover surplus stocks were used to fill the gap with limited success.³⁷

The rapid expansion of the ROKA resulted in an unbalanced development of organizations and a lack of ability to capitalize on new equipment. As one example of how this expansion caused problems, KMAG considered an option to convert several mechanized units back to duties as horse cavalry, and having motorized units turn in their vehicles for pack mules and oxcarts as a way of reducing demand for fuel and other supplies. While this suggestion exemplifies the sustainment principles of simplicity and improvisation, it also offered an unfortunate display of how important certain commodities are to a modern force. The crucial supplies were either lost in transit or just did not exist in quantities sufficient to support the rapidly expanding force the first place.³⁸ Changes in organization and tactics driven by an inability to sustain combat forces are obviously undesirable in peacetime, but potentially deadly in war. Modern doctrine encompasses the concept of “lacking required resources to achieve the end state” as the culmination element of operational art and leads to the inability to continue a current form of operations.³⁹ Had the KMAG not been able to influence the situation, the ROK would certainly have been at risk of destruction.

Given the low levels of mechanization of the Koreans before the conflict, there was also a wide lack of understanding of how equipment such as vehicles, engines, and support equipment were operated and maintained. Contrary to expectations, the Koreans adapted very well to their

³⁷Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 184-185; Sawyer, 209-211.

³⁸Millett, 215.

³⁹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4-8.

situation given the constraints they were operating within; most importantly, they adapted their own ways of operating to meet their capabilities.⁴⁰

Outcomes

The ROKA emerged from the detritus of WWII with little mechanization and no ability to incorporate donations of money or material into their force. They were subsequently fielded aging equipment, and proceeded to discard it once it broke due to lack of understanding on how to maintain the equipment. After heroic efforts by the South Koreans in conjunction with their KMAC advisors to organize, train, equip, and build an army, the ROKA emerged as a legitimate fighting force capable of ensuring the defense of their newly formed nation. This experience provides insight to modern efforts for several reasons. The most notable are: (1) the effort achieved the intended purpose; and (2) KMAC helped create an enduring regional partnership that exists today.

One advantage held by American advisors was that the training audience was receptive when given the right incentive. At the outset, the Koreans were technologically lagging yet displayed “an inherent aptitude for training and learning new methods” including how to create a self-sustainable force.⁴¹ This dynamic is the single most important aspect of building partner capacity, and must be understood by advisors when embarking upon a mission to improve the capabilities of partner forces. While faced with some remarkable difficulties, “KMAC made the difference” by executing a holistic training effort that was nested with efforts at improving organizational structures and ability to integrate newer equipment, which acknowledged and accounted for differences in culture and incorporated a need to increase sustainment

⁴⁰Anderson.

⁴¹Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 42.

capabilities.⁴² The continued existence of the ROK may not have been possible had it not been for the KMAG, whose advising efforts produced a logistics structure capable of some ability to support their forces.⁴³

Direct partnership with other nations in order to assist in organization, training, and equipping of the partner's armed forces was still a relatively new mission for the United States when the Army came to the assistance of the South Koreans following WWII. Though the KMAG faced what at the time appeared to be insurmountable difficulties—a nation and people devastated by occupation, a culture and language barrier, and a growth in force size that rapidly outpaced commensurate sustainment capability—the advisory group and their ROKA partners were able to produce a viable, sustainable force that continued to work together even after the conflict. The lessons learned by American forces and their Korean counterparts provide potential keys to future SFA commitments.

LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES, 1950-1975

From 1950 to 1953, the Korean War heavily influenced American policy regarding participation in Indochina. The North Korean attack confirmed President Truman's suspicion of Soviet intent on attaining hegemony in Asia, and thus he ordered an exponential increase to aid provided to French efforts in Indochina. This served as a second front in an indirect conflict with the USSR.⁴⁴ With the creation of South Vietnam by the Geneva Accords of 1954 and cessation of the French-Indochina War, American officials recognized the region as vulnerable to Communist

⁴²Gibby, *Fighting in a Korean War*, 320.

⁴³Ibid., 9, 320.

⁴⁴George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), 123.

expansion; stopping the “red tide of Communism” was seen as imperative.⁴⁵ Within that endeavor, commitment of American advisors was seen as the lowest cost and highest payoff option towards the improvement of South Vietnamese logistics capabilities. The focus of this case study is whether the advisory mission resulted in an effective logistical system that the South Vietnamese were able to independently manage. First, this case study will define the strategic setting, then will delineate how American forces organized themselves to build sustainment capabilities within partner forces, then define what the advisors actually accomplished, and will finally highlight the challenges encountered which are useful to future efforts.

Strategic Setting

American administrations during this period were extremely interested in containing Communism, and believed that Southeast Asia was the prime place to do so. To answer a deterioration of political, economic, and social conditions the American effort in South Vietnam evolved from merely supporting French efforts into a robust military effort, specifically the “largest, longest, and most costly advising effort” that the United States had seen to date.⁴⁶ The hollow government that existed in Vietnam led the Eisenhower Administration to believe that if Vietnam fell to Communism, all of Southeast Asia would follow suit. As a secondary rationale, involvement in Vietnam also allowed his administration to test the expansion of democracy in Asia.⁴⁷ Emerging from the Geneva Accords of 1954 was a weak South Vietnamese government coupled with a determined Communist neighbor to the north, which compelled continued American participation in South Vietnam.

⁴⁵Herring, 43. This comment was made by an aspiring and then-Senator John F. Kennedy; Herring espouses that this mindset was prevalent in the Eisenhower administration.

⁴⁶Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 73.

⁴⁷Ibid., 44.

From 1950 to 1955, American participation in Indochina started within the Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG), operating under the umbrella of a mutual defense agreement with France, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In the early years, MAAG's sole purpose was to administer a support program on behalf of the American government as a "small logistical accounting group," and support was restricted to provision of supplies and equipment.⁴⁸ Even though the Chinese did not contribute their best units or weapons to the North Vietnamese Viet Minh, during this period they provided a sense of urgency to the American mission because of their provision of large quantities of equipment and up to 15,000 advisors.⁴⁹

The French departure after the Geneva Accords of 1954 left an abysmal situation for the Vietnamese regarding equipment. Equipment left behind was excess and not useful to French efforts in North Africa. This equipment had been used extensively under wartime conditions, had been "literally dumped" in place with no organization system or means of understanding what was present, and therefore left little to offer the Vietnamese; even the most well trained supply personnel had a hard time making sense of the French detritus.⁵⁰ The hasty French departure violates the modern day sustainment principle of continuity, whereby supported units are confident "in sustainment allowing commanders freedom of action, operational reach, and endurance" as they were forced to focus significant effort towards cataloging stocks on hand.⁵¹ Even more harmful than the mess the French had left behind was the absolute shambles of a government that arose upon French departure; with inexperienced civil-servants, no influence

⁴⁸James Lawton Collins, Jr., *The Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army, 1950-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), 1.

⁴⁹Ronald H. Spector, CMH Pub 91- 1, *Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983), 124-125.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 5.

⁵¹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

over the population outside of the cities, and antiquated methods based on French methods of governance the result was a government whose “authority did not extend beyond its own offices.”⁵²

By October 1955, the MAAG had changed names to the Military Advisory and Assistance Group, Vietnam (MAAG-V) and consisted of a cadre of 342 individuals, and had the charter to improve the already existing but insufficient capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam (RVNAF) to counter the growing threat from the Viet Minh.⁵³ With the Korean experience relatively fresh in the minds of participants, the United States used KMAG efforts to guide force design for the RVNAF. Much the same as KMAG, the MAAG-V transitioned from a mission of logistics support to a broad mission of training the Vietnamese Army in 1956, consuming 78 percent of the total American government foreign aid budget while doing so.⁵⁴ MAAG-V was intent on organizing, training, and equipping, forces capable of countering a conventional threat, and placed less effort towards countering subversion and insurgency until 1959.⁵⁵

Organization

As the advisory effort progressed, advisors transitioned out of strategic and operational roles towards the tactical level. In October 1961, the Military Representative to the President, General Maxwell Taylor, reported to President Kennedy that “the South Vietnamese government

⁵²Herring, 46.

⁵³Collins, 2.

⁵⁴Herring, 56.

⁵⁵Collins, 12.

was losing the war through poor tactics and administration,” and thereby recommended an overall expansion of the effort in South Vietnam to include increased logistical support forces.⁵⁶

This process started in earnest in December 1961 when Secretary of Defense McNamara signed an order authorizing provincial-level advisors, an advisory team to each combat battalion, and combat support units for the RVNAF.⁵⁷ As an indicator of the newly established importance of this, the structure of the advisory mission increased in size from 500 advisors in 1960 to 23,000 in 1964; this increase was commensurate with an increase in the number and types of support units.⁵⁸ This period of rapid expansion and reorganization was accompanied by an acknowledgement of the importance of sustaining these units, displayed by a reorganization of the logistical infrastructure supporting the force. One such example was the creation of a decentralized supply system through a series of regional logistical commands, designed to alleviate the need to control all logistics operations from Saigon.⁵⁹ On February 8, 1962 the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was officially formed, and the MAAG-V’s American advisors now reported to the MACV commander rather than the American ambassador. The intent of this new command was to identify one organization as “responsible for all U.S. military policy, operations, and assistance” minus any policy decisions addressed by the American Ambassador to South Vietnam.⁶⁰ Though the MAAG-V was initially a subordinate element to MACV, the two organizations were consolidated into a single organization in May 1964.

⁵⁶Collins, 23.

⁵⁷Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 28.

⁵⁸Jeffery J. Clarke, CMH Pub 91-3, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988), 13.

⁵⁹Collins, 21.

⁶⁰Ibid., 28.

American logistic advisors responsibilities were to assist in the recovery of used war materiel, and to increase the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese logistical system. In the beginning, no advisors were assigned at the battalion or lower levels.⁶¹ In these units, combat arms officers were primarily used for training of all tasks to include administrative and logistical duties; the expectation was that MACV advisors would train a wide variety of tasks. An infantryman was not solely an infantryman; he had to teach all aspects of being a soldier including how to work towards self-sufficiency.⁶² The stated goals of MACV in 1962 acknowledged the need to develop the capacity for South Vietnamese forces to sustain themselves, and included “logistics and administration” in their overall mission statement.⁶³

By the end of 1962, it looked as if American participation was going to achieve the desired effects. However, in late 1963, a series of riots coupled with a military coup led to the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem. This led to a period of unrest that did not abate until 1965. The RVNAF experienced a crisis of morale, which obviated all progress towards effective military structure and function.⁶⁴ The end of 1964 proved a tipping point between the ability to advise effectively, and the sheer desire to not allow the RVNAF to fail in the face of overmatch. The efforts at population-focused civic action (pacification) combined with difficulties in training the RVNAF contributed to the emergence of an idea within the advisor corps that creating an effective and self-sustaining RVNAF was insurmountable.⁶⁵

⁶¹Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 32.

⁶²Ibid., 35.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Collins, 31.

⁶⁵Ibid., 46.

MACV Advises the RVNAF by Example

The RVNAF started at a deficit after the French experiment in Indochina, specifically because the French had personally occupied key command and staff positions of all disciplines within the Vietnamese organizations. The MAAG-V assisted in the process of making sense of the disorder the French left, and committed \$85 million dollars a year between 1955 and 1960 to the effort.⁶⁶ When the French departed, inexperienced and untrained South Vietnamese filled the vacuum, and the condition was “particularly critical in the technical and logistical areas.”⁶⁷ As American advisors had done in Korea, MAAG-V advisors organized a logistical system that mirrored American doctrine and had the South Vietnamese technical services using American supply procedures as early 1957.⁶⁸ Similar to the Korean logistical system in 1954, the RVNAF logistics systems in 1964 were functioning effectively, but only because American advisors actively served in roles within the RVNAF structure as opposed to strictly acting in an advisory capacity.⁶⁹

The logistical system the advisors established for the RVNAF by 1964 was largely organized around the American technical services system of Ordnance, Quartermaster, Medical, Signal, and Engineer as the five distinct entities, and was generally considered successful.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, each technical service at echelons above the Army of the Republic of Vietnam division had its own support structure. Within the divisions, divisional technical service companies accomplished logistics support; as with the technical service organizations above

⁶⁶Herring, 57.

⁶⁷Collins, 15.

⁶⁸Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹Dong Van Khuyen, *RVNAF Logistics* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1980), 98.

⁷⁰Collins, 7.

division, there was very little commonality in organization for the mission.⁷¹ This disconnect led to a lack in unity of purpose at each echelon and for each service.

As the nature of the conflict evolved, advisory duties changed too. The period of 1965-1966 brought the introduction of American combat forces to South Vietnam, and advisory duties expanded to include “law and order, morale and recreation, post exchange, base development, liaison, and visitor and community relations.”⁷² This organization stayed relatively the same until the initiation of Vietnamization in 1969 by President Nixon, in which the drawdown of American personnel forced the South Vietnamese to assume a primary role in the sustainability of their forces. This marked an official shift away from pure advisory roles to combat assistance teams, meaning that advisors shifted from advising to coordinating, which is the way that advisors were used until American withdrawal in 1973.⁷³

Vietnamization gave impetus to reorganize the “entire logistical structure,” which would not have been required had there been a more active role earlier in the conflict.⁷⁴ This rebuild was wide-ranging in scope, including everything from equipment refurbishment, facilities allocation, and inventory management.⁷⁵ This reorganization accompanied a rapid expansion of the entire RVNAF, and the supporting logistics structure struggled to keep up just as had been the case in Korea. The rapid expansion, coupled with fewer American advisors filling key positions resulted in gaps in the lower and mid-echelon management. To address the shortfall, the ARVN Logistics School expanded their training programs for supply and maintenance personnel, providing a

⁷¹Khuyen, 95-96.

⁷²Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 29.

⁷³Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴Khuyen, 103-107.

⁷⁵Ibid.

venue for American logistics advisors to continue their logistics advisory mission.⁷⁶ The reorganization caused a fundamental shift in how the RVNAF operated, all in the attempt to deviate from “years of relatively static and disjointed territorial security duty” which prevented the development of their ability to execute longer duration operations due to a lack of supporting functions.⁷⁷ Another effort by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to become more self-sufficient was the launch of a “Logistics Offensive Campaign” to involve commanders in the logistical activities of their organizations. Commanders took a deep dive into specific sustainment issues, which made clear that the American logistical system that the Vietnamese had relied on so heavily since 1954 was not permanent in nature.⁷⁸

Challenges

The task of generating a self-sustaining RVNAF was complicated by ambiguous or non-existent guidance on what objectives were desired by the Vietnamese security forces, differences in thought processes between the advisor and the advisee, and unrealistic expectations of both parties. These lessons provide important insight for planners of future advisory efforts. American internal frictions such as the differing structures in the various technical services, as well as those implicit when interacting with another culture complicated relationships with the Vietnamese, also provide examples of how the policies of American institutions contributed to problems with our partners.

General Westmoreland, the MACV commander, appealed to the Army that “the finest officers and NCOs are made available for assignment to MACV as advisors”⁷⁹ but volunteering

⁷⁶Khuyen, 120.

⁷⁷Andrew J. Birtle, CMH Pub, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976*, vol. 70-98-1 (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 2006), 327.

⁷⁸Khuyen, 107-108.

⁷⁹Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 38.

for advising duties was not seen as desirable after the introduction of combat units to Vietnam in 1965. Unfortunately, his appeals did not match the way his priorities for personnel assignment were executed in theater after 1965. In execution, General Westmoreland's number one priority routinely focused on American combat units, and if shortages arose—as they frequently did—the needed personnel were transferred from advisory roles into combat units. This served to further negatively stigmatize assignment as an advisor.⁸⁰

Once an individual was assigned as an advisor, the duties presented unfamiliar challenges to someone who was accustomed to “giving and executing orders” as American service members generally were.⁸¹ As an advisor, they were presented with seemingly intractable problems and had only intuition to rely on for solutions, and had to integrate themselves into vastly different cultural and organizational norms.⁸² Solving problems in South Vietnam was tough, but getting a partner to internalize potential solutions and act in a manner to fix the problem added an entirely new level of difficulty. In addition, the American decision to rotate advisors every six months contributed to difficulties between the partners. The American expectation was to serve for six months as an advisor in Vietnam, and subsequently serve in non-advisory positions. The unstated message to the Vietnamese was that American commitment towards the success of the mission was fleeting, which did not inspire confidence and the Vietnamese were not inspired to follow the examples set forth by the advisors.⁸³

The inexperience of logistical personnel within the RVNAF served as a hindrance to logistical efficacy, and the constant changing of equipment and organization exacerbated the

⁸⁰Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 38.

⁸¹Ibid., 35.

⁸²Ibid., 34-35.

⁸³Ibid., 49.

problem.⁸⁴ After 1964, Army of the Republic of Vietnam units typically received any supply shortfalls directly from the United States by way of the advisors. This ensured that the end-user had access to equipment as necessary, but the bypassing of ARVN supply channels prevented improvements to their own logistic systems. As a result, ARVN operations were tailored in scope and duration to ensure no major logistic support requirements, largely through conducting rare excursions overnight and few missions longer than a day.⁸⁵ The United States committed a significant amount of resources to the improvement of RVNAF including their capacity to sustain themselves logistically. The American advisory effort in Vietnam was organized well enough and resourced at a sufficient level to develop an effective RVNAF logistical system.

Given the South Vietnamese military's acquiescence to allow the United States to lead in the realm of logistics until Vietnamization, it is useful to examine how differing ideas regarding language barriers, cultural differences, and advisor mentality contributed to diminished influence over the RVNAF. American soldiers were results-oriented, enabled in this mindset by the organizational structure in which they operated. Advisors came to the conclusion that tasks would not be accomplished unless they personally did them, and sometimes had "only the vaguest idea of the effect" their advice had on their counterparts.⁸⁶ The Vietnamese accused the American advisors of an inability and lack of desire to understand their concerns; what might be seen as corruption and inefficiency to an American advisor was seen as normal procedure within Vietnamese operations.⁸⁷ Differences in language also frayed the relationship between the advisor and the South Vietnamese. As an interesting example of the difficulties caused by linguistic

⁸⁴Khuyen, 97.

⁸⁵See Khuyen, 97-98; Birtle, 322-323.

⁸⁶Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 44.

⁸⁷Herring, 163.

differences, the English word advisor implies in the Vietnamese language power behind the throne which, in Vietnamese culture, is generally someone to avoid.⁸⁸ In addition, of note, the abilities and cultural bias of the interpreter sometimes added to the problem by the introduction of deliberate inaccuracies.⁸⁹ Regardless of the cause, the Vietnamese frequently did not understand what their American counterpart expected of them.⁹⁰

In many cases, the challenges between the two cultures simply came down to unrealistic expectations for both parties. American advisors had structural expectations about their encounters with RVNAF, opinions that were based in their experiences in the Korean War. In Korea, when American advisors expressed concerns to President Rhee, changes had followed. In the RVNAF, “no South Vietnamese government required RVNAF to respond to MACV concerns.”⁹¹ The most reliable tool for working with counterparts became personal relationships, but the very nature of the tool caused variations in approach rather than standardization. American advisors also expected that their Vietnamese counterparts would accept practices and procedures simply because they were the American way of operations. Unfortunately, convincing the Vietnamese to do things like the Americans was only a moderately successful proposition. The American mentality favored hierarchical organizations and reliance on structures and procedures, whereas the Vietnamese relied upon the capabilities and tendencies of the commander alone. At odds with American procedures, the Vietnamese worked within systems only to the extent that they benefitted themselves or their families.⁹² This led to advisor

⁸⁸Herring, 53.

⁸⁹Ibid., 47.

⁹⁰Ibid., 163.

⁹¹Ibid., 48.

⁹²Ibid., 49.

frustration when Vietnamese counterparts smiled and said okay, and then went off and did something their own way.

American advisors learned that to properly inculcate effective change took time, and thereby incorporated indirect methods of teaching. The process of Vietnamization seemed to function as a turning point in the relationship. The American advisors took a more relaxed and open role towards cooperation, which inspired confidence, forced their Vietnamese counterparts to take greater pride in their own achievements, and consequently allowed for greater thought about the future.⁹³ Problems still existed in situations that required rapid action or fixes of multiple problems, but the Vietnamese now had their own sense of urgency towards their situation. Vietnamese counterparts were thrust into primary roles for guiding the future of the RVNAF, whereas the assumption before Vietnamization had been that the American advisors would stay until certain conditions were met. The Vietnamese met these challenges in the best ways that they could, with very specific logistics improvement plans and programs.⁹⁴

Outcomes

American participation in Vietnam from 1950 to 1973 produced tangible results in the RVNAF, generating a force that was a “battle-tested, well-equipped force” of over a million members.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, superior numbers do not directly correlate to success, and the organizational and cultural problems that remained, like lack of confidence and over-reliance on American support, contributed to the South Vietnamese inability to create an effective or self-sustaining defensive stance against the North Vietnamese invasion of 1975.

⁹³Khuyen, 446.

⁹⁴See Lieutenant General Joseph M. Heiser, Jr., CMH Pub 90-15, *Logistic Support* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1974), 232-240; Khuyen, 105-106.

⁹⁵Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 32.

Even if the MAAG-V advisors had acknowledged the greater threat of an insurgency than was realized, some consider the task of building an army capable of fighting both conventional and unconventional threats a “near-impossible” task.⁹⁶ MAAG-V had leaned towards that which they were more familiar, a bias that should be of interest for planners of future efforts.

The defeat of the RVNAF exposed the dangers of an advisor corps which bears too much of the burden for the success of their counterpart. The successes of the RVNAF between 1965 and 1975 had been primarily a function of American combat power, and not the result of action by the South Vietnamese government.⁹⁷ Such problems illustrate why examination of historical American advisory efforts is useful in developing approaches to current and future advisory operations. The American experience in Vietnam, along with that of the KMAG in Korea, and the lessons that can be taken from those experiences, should be studied and applied when designing future SFA efforts.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A useful mechanism for testing contemporary military practice is to overlay influences from history, theory, and doctrine. This helps attain a more complete understanding of how conditions have evolved and displays relevant changes over time. The integration of those observations enable plans that are better informed. The Army is entering a critical window for the post-conflict analysis of Iraq and Afghanistan, and must not only incorporate lessons of the last 13 years into preparations for future efforts, but must also measure how the lessons of 70 years of advising can inform planned efforts.

SFA is a prime example of a military contribution to strategic objectives where history has informed theory, which in turn has emerged in contemporary doctrine. Having analyzed case

⁹⁶Herring, 58.

⁹⁷Birtle, 326.

studies of logistics SFA in Korea and Vietnam, this paper will now offer useful observations from those case studies and offer potential impacts to contemporary SFA operations by first outlining the strategic environment, acknowledging counterpoints, and subsequently making recommendations for the future that account for observations and account for those counterpoints.

Observations

Each case study offers unique circumstances of success and failure, yet there are some commonalities between actions in Korean and Vietnam that prove insightful. Observations from the two case studies serve as a historical basis to judge future SFA. JCISFA offers methodologies to measure progress towards self-sufficiency, and one such construct is the OTERA model. This is a tool, used in conjunction with the SFA imperatives, which helps organize and employ military forces in such a way that ends, ways, and means are integrated within the effort and there is a deliberate plan to account for unique capabilities and shortfalls of an identified partner.⁹⁸ Knowing how to analyze a partner along the lines of OTERA helps “identify the SFA tasks that will support the FSF’s model rather than simply importing a US model to the FSF organization.”⁹⁹

Organize

Without effective processes, institutions, and infrastructure to enable the independent decisions of the partner nation, FSF cannot establish the command and staff processes to achieve self-sufficiency. Advisors must ensure when advising a growing FSF that force structure of supporting agencies and institutions are organizationally sufficient to provide for the

⁹⁸Director, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Planners’ Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, 2008).

⁹⁹Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, III-7.

requirements of their total force, which may require interaction and development of ministerial level entities also.

Train

Before engaging with FSF, the advisors must first train themselves on the importance of developing a working relationship, and subsequently the fundamentals of the culture, language, and equipment of the partner. Once an advisor can demonstrate those characteristics they must act to “improve, and integrate training, leader development, and education” at all levels of the FSF, to include not only fundamental warfighting skills but also more importantly the ability to anticipate logistical requirements and act upon them.¹⁰⁰

Equip

The ability to affect how FSF equip themselves and subsequently maintain the newly fielded equipment is critical to influencing a partner in a durable manner. SFA planners must analyze the capability of the partner to operate, maintain, and fund the equipment before any fielding program. FSF ability to execute these tasks directly relates to the ability to extend operational reach and the endurance of their forces.

Rebuild/Build

The central idea behind the rebuild/build aspect of OTERA is the physical infrastructure the FSF establishes to support their force and stage for operations. How the bases, ranges, and structures are arrayed heavily affects the FSF ability to prepare for, execute, and sustain operations. This capability takes time to develop, and therefore must be deliberately planned and requires early investment.

¹⁰⁰Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, III-10.

Advise/Assist

Advising FSF is a process where advisors work with FSF, using various means of influence, to progress towards improvement in capability and capacity. This can occur in either combat or peacetime conditions, but ideally occurs in a less demanding situation where both parties can establish a relationship built on trust and confidence. The Army special operations community operates on an imperative that is important to conventional forces conducting SFA, and that is a call for advisors to avoid beginning “programs that are beyond the economic, technological, or sociocultural capabilities of the HN to maintain without further U.S. assistance.”¹⁰¹

Korea

Overall, the South Korean Army developed into an effective and self-sustaining force, largely due to effective American advisory efforts. This success did not come easily, and American experiences in Korea provide three important lessons for future military advisors: (1) advisors may have to help partners understand the importance of proper organization to enable logistics development in concert with the improvement of combat capabilities; (2) advisors need to train themselves on strategies to deal with partners who are unwilling to accept American methods; and (3) advisors should equip and advise FSF to good-enough solutions to logistical challenges if it is implementable and sustainable by the partner and progresses towards the desired purpose.

The KMAG enabling the re-organization of their partners, largely due to the relationships build within not only the ROKA, but the ROK also. The American experience in Korea with rapidly increasing organizational structures suggests that SFA organizations should seek to advise

¹⁰¹Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-15.

a balanced approach to improvement to developing organizations; capabilities must improve, but capacity and the ability to self-sustain must experience a commensurate improvement. This goal has been inculcated in the text of the *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance* produced by the JCISFA: “the resulting forces must possess the capability to accomplish the variety of required missions, with sufficient capacity to be successful and with the ability to sustain themselves as long as required.”¹⁰²

Fortunately for the KMAG advisors, culture worked to their favor. The Koreans had “thousands of years of experience adapting foreign philosophies to their own needs and values,” which erased a potential divide that the American advisors would experience in other cultures.¹⁰³ The Koreans were relatively receptive to integrating themselves into the training and education that the United States would provide, which provides an excellent case study into the importance of the train aspect of OTERA. An assessment of the partner’s receptiveness to American methods, and the development of strategies to overcome the resistance of those who are not receptive, is an essential component to participation in future efforts, incorporating an analysis of the ability to accomplish the desired effects within time, space, and resource limitations.

Analysis of how the KMAG equipped the ROKA is another useful lesson that can be drawn from the OTERA model for future efforts. As was demonstrated in Korea within the auspices of Operation Roll-Up, simply dumping equipment on a partner without an associated fielding, accountability, and maintenance program is detrimental to long-term success of the FSF largely due to the increased and unmanageable burdens incurred. As the ROKA evolved to mimic American solutions, KMAG also learned to accept local solutions that were good-enough rather

¹⁰²Director, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, 2008), 1.

¹⁰³Brazinsky, 6.

than forcing the American way upon their partners. The most instructive example was that of acknowledging the lagging transportation system, and then allowing the Korean Service Corps to develop a network that relied not on limited American motorization, but rather on Korean foot power. Planners must be willing to improvise, which is consequently a principle of sustainment within the U.S. Army, and maintain awareness of their cultural surroundings to decipher when an equipping and advising solution is good enough for the partnered forces, and works towards the achievement of American goals.

Vietnam

The case study of logistics SFA in Vietnam also provides useful observations for future efforts, albeit for differing reasons from the KMAG. Vietnam's advisor operations demonstrate to future advisors the importance of training partners to improve rather than immediately defaulting to the assist task within OTERA and simply accomplishing the tasks themselves, the importance of the sustainment principle of anticipation to the ability to create a self-sustaining force, and the importance of having a host-nation organizational and governmental structures that support the advisory effort.

The MAAG-V demonstrated how advising under combat conditions can easily transition to assisting FSF in order to prevent critical failure "at a point that would undermine the overall effort."¹⁰⁴ In opposition to the building block approach that the OTERA construct offers, American advisors in Vietnam focused heavily on the provision of resources and personally executed key tasks for the RVNAF. The heavy reliance on the American forces by the RVNAF without the corresponding improvement of organization, training, and equipping contributed to later failure when the Vietnamese were left to execute operations on their own. Advisors focused

¹⁰⁴Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 2-8.

on short-term mission accomplishment rather than the long-term mission of creating sustainable capability within the RVNAF. Given American military culture of constant desire for success, this problem could easily arise in future advisory missions; evidence of this already exists in contemporary efforts: “with the Afghan supply chain still undeveloped and the Defense Ministry still hobbled by corruption, army units across the country aren’t getting the gear and parts that they need.”¹⁰⁵ Coverage of American efforts such as this might lead to a temptation to take an overly active role, however the experience in Vietnam should caution future advisors against it; advisory forces must continue to develop the institutions, organizations, and abilities of the FSF in order to leave a self-capable unit in their wake.

As a principle of sustainment within the U.S. Army, anticipation is defined as “the ability to foresee operational requirements and initiate necessary actions” without intervention from higher.¹⁰⁶ Because this idea is ingrained within the U.S. advisor’s thought process, they must recognize how their partner’s willingness to anticipate future requirements is an outcome of cultural inclination for planning and preparing. If advisors understand the cultural narratives that shape their partner’s world views, they can accommodate those factors into their teaching methods and desired outcomes. “You’ve got to train the folks who are doing the ministry work, developing the policies, ensuring the troops are paid, arranging buying their logistics, getting the fuel for them, and all the rest of that. If you can’t develop those, they can very much erode and undermine the development of the units.”¹⁰⁷ The RVNAF were more than willing to allow the MACV to anticipate for them.

¹⁰⁵Kevin Sieff, “Afghan Army Hindered by Broken Gear, Bad Logistics,” *The Washington Post*, October 19, 2013.

¹⁰⁶Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 4-0, I-3.

¹⁰⁷Then-Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus in Kendall D. Gott and Michael G. Brooks, eds., *Security Assistance: U.S. and International Historical Perspectives, Proceedings of the Combat Studies*

Also demonstrated in Vietnam, the mentorship of an advisor is more helpful when the effort is endorsed and organized from “tactical through strategic levels, and in support of individuals or groups.”¹⁰⁸ Unlike Korea, in Vietnam there was no combined military command that allowed the MACV any significant influence over their partners, and instead they simply “coordinated and suggested.”¹⁰⁹ It is important to ensure that the partner nation’s political leadership supports achievement of the goals, but these leaders and institutions must also be willing to learn themselves. Summarizing this need for institutional leadership beyond the creation of tactical units, General David Petraeus noted in 2006 that, “if you can’t get the top right, over time what you build at the bottom will not be effectively used. In fact, it could be misused and the effort undermined.”¹¹⁰ For sustainable force improvement to happen, political leaders in the partnered nation must understand that the most notable capability of the greatest militaries in history is their ability to “sustain operations at a distance over time,” an important detail when it comes time to endorse a defense budget.¹¹¹

Commonalities

The advisors of both the KMAG and MACV experienced several common issues, suggesting the likely potential that these issues will be seen again in future efforts. These common issues can be summarized in three general themes, again using components of the OTERA tasks to analyze not only partner capacity, but the American effort also: American advisors must ensure that the partner organization and goals are in line with broader American

Institute 2006 Military History Symposium (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁰⁸Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, III-10.

¹⁰⁹Ramsey, Occasional Paper 18, 48.

¹¹⁰Petraeus, 11-12.

¹¹¹Dr. Michael O’ Hanlon in Gott and Brooks, 453-454.

objectives within the region, advisors have to train themselves and the FSF in such a way that accounts for language and cultural differences and supports the achievement of desired strategic objectives.

Preventing the spread of communism was a common theme in the cases of KMAG and MACV involvement, providing a built-in alignment of U.S. government desires with that of the partner goals. Within the modern construct, the mitigation of influence by terrorist organizations might provide the same structure. The American military is currently prohibited from involvement in development of FSF in countries that have been “implicated in gross human rights violations, unless the Secretary of State determines that the host government is taking effective measures to bring those responsible to justice.”¹¹² Control measures such as this serve as a mechanism to align strategic interests. Where interests are not so neatly aligned, new arrangements must be made to ensure a similar consistency.

In both Korea and Vietnam, American advisors encountered languages and associated cultures they were unaccustomed to, and the experiences of the KMAG and MACV illustrated the importance of training mature and capable advisors. An inherent in a requirement for senior and mature military personnel is that they are “difficult to cultivate in mass and capped by legislation, mid- to senior-level leaders are a treasured resource.”¹¹³ Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have included similar cultural experiences and this trend is likely to continue in the future. The advisors have to navigate through an ambiguous operating environment with myriad problems including the need to incorporate the use of interpreters and challenges and risks that come with their employment, the need for more than a cursory understanding of culture of partner nation,

¹¹²Thomas K. Livingston, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R41817, *Building the Capacity of Partner States Through Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, May 5, 2011), 37.

¹¹³Gene Germanovich, “Security Force Assistance in a Time of Austerity,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 67 (4th Quarter 2012): 14–19.

and an understanding of the structures that regulate the social, economic, and religious mechanisms within the country. How doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities are adjusted to account for this requirement is important, and the subject of increasing attention. Included in the February 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* is a mandate that general-purpose forces will “strengthen and institutionalize” their capability for SFA through “enhanced linguistic, regional, and cultural ability.”¹¹⁴ Such a mandate shows that the DOD recognizes the importance of these skills. Balancing these requirements with the further difficulties of job-skill mismatches, whereby “infantry officers are tasked to teach logistic and maintenance management,” one can easily see how including logisticians to the SFA package can help ease the burden on contributions from other branches in the process.¹¹⁵

Modern Strategic Environment

The experiences of the KMAG and MACV, along with other efforts, have shaped how the United States currently organizes to build the security capacity of partner states. Under the contemporary Geographic Combatant Command and Department of State’s Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations construct, each entity works together to define what efforts contribute to the overall improved conditions within their geographic locations and regional engagement strategies. The way that advisory missions are executed should contribute to the ends desired by answering why we are compelled to action and what that we are doing contributes to the overall sustainability of the partners, how tactical actions support the achievement of strategic objectives and teach partners to be self-sufficient, and how to judge if our effects are sustainable.

¹¹⁴Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government, Department of Defense, 2010), 28-29.

¹¹⁵Major Albert Tabarez in Gott and Brooks, 219-220.

Contemporary Strategic Reasons for SFA

The President of the United States envisions that building partnership capacity is an important way for the United States to contribute to the global arena, and thus will “seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations.”¹¹⁶ His plan is to execute this through development of “innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches” which will rely on “rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.”¹¹⁷ The DOD has chosen to build partner capacity through SFA operations, which is a “means to develop, within a host nation, an enduring capability to establish and maintain security, provide legitimate governance, and foster development programs that address root grievances.”¹¹⁸ The State Department also has a key piece in achieving strategic objectives, though they approach the problem from a different angle. Their focus is more along the lines of “we will build the capacity of partners to counter regional threats. We will support efforts to strengthen partner nations’ law enforcement, internal defense, and border and maritime security capabilities. We will support the professionalization and accountability of law enforcement institutions, including border security, and internal defense and military forces.”¹¹⁹

Doctrinal Framework

Army doctrine outlines the importance of and methods for creating self-sustaining partners specifically within Field Manual 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*. This publication is a direct response to DOD’s direction to execute SFA in order to “support the development of the

¹¹⁶Department of Defense, *Defense Strategic Guidance*, 3.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁸Livingston, 1.

¹¹⁹Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen, Jr., F. Dean Raab, and Geoffrey Adams, “Security Cooperation Doctrine and Authorities: Closing the Gaps,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 71 (4th Quarter 2013): 74–78.

capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions.”¹²⁰ As mentioned earlier, those supporting institutions are of critical importance to having any lasting effect on foreign security forces. The DoD hopes to achieve, through the increases in partner self-sufficiency, a decrease in “need for American troop intervention world wide.”¹²¹

JCISFA outlines five SFA imperatives for planners at the Combatant Command level to incorporate into planning efforts “from the very beginning for every phase of a campaign, and not just an afterthought for the transition, stability, or reconstruction period following combat operations.”¹²² These imperatives, which should aid in designing more successful SFA operations, are: understand the operational environment, provide effective leadership, build legitimacy, manage information, ensure unity of effort/unity of purpose, and sustain the effort.

Recommendations

Several recommendations easily emerge from the observations of logistics SFA in Korea and Vietnam in conjunction with the current strategic environment. Advisors must understand the uniqueness of the situation they find themselves within, the logistics subject-matter-experts must be involved not only with sustaining American forces but also creating self-sustaining partners, and all advisors must learn how to organize, train, and equip an independent partner rather than just doing the work for them. Not only is SFA growing as a tactical means to achieve strategic objectives, but there is also a growing level of attention among influential civilians to ensure that our efforts have a longer-term effects, so that resources are more efficiently used and so as to “prevent conflict from occurring or preclude the involvement of large numbers of American

¹²⁰Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense Instruction 5000.8: *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 18.

¹²¹Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Planners’ Guide*, i.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 23.

forces.”¹²³ Creating partners who can sustain themselves supports the increasing desire towards “developing mission strategies with longer-term results in mind” and yet an invaluable mechanism to gauge progress towards that objective is relegated to staffing products at the joint service level.¹²⁴

Assessment Mechanism

OTERA is an “approach by commanders and staffs to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means” with a focus on SFA.¹²⁵ The framework of OTERA helps analyze the current state of partner capabilities along functional lines, negotiate a desired end state with the partner, and the OTERA model gives lines of operation to help move the partner from the current to the desired state by focusing effort on the OTERA tasks which are reasonably achievable when considering the capabilities of the partner to receive the assistance and compared to the level of United States involvement.¹²⁶ The model allows the planner assessment mechanisms to judge capability and capacity, but is also useful when assessing U.S. apportionment of effort also. As such, OTERA should be further integrated and relied upon by joint and Army doctrine.

¹²³Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Planners’ Guide*, 1.

¹²⁴Roland Paris Timothy D. Sisk, eds., *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*. Security and Governance Series (London: Routledge, 2009), 313-314.

¹²⁵Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, 4-1.

¹²⁶Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, III-9 - III-10.

Assignments and Expectations

Once committed to an advisory mission, U.S. commanders have a choice as to what product to end up with.¹²⁷ If the goal is simply to maintain positive relationships with other countries, then participation in any form will meet that requirement. If, however, the desire is to produce an enduring partner capacity for self-determination, missions should ensure to focus efforts on longer-lasting outcomes and align resources against achieving those outcomes. A way to align resources against intended outcomes is to further invest in advisory capability. This might involve structural changes to the force, however the current force could indeed meet the requirement as evidenced by the U.S. Army's Regionally Aligned Force concept as it exists at this writing. Another way to align resources against intended outcome of creating self-sustaining partners is to ensure a multi-functional look at provision of advisors; logisticians should not only be capable of their technical skill, but must understand how to train that skill to an indigenous population.

Another recommendation for future SFA operations is to ensure logistics advisors are assigned at the battalion and brigade training level to avoid "infantry officers who were tasked to teach logistic and maintenance management to a newly formed native unit."¹²⁸ History shows that officers are capable of multidisciplinary instruction, but the effort may not be the most efficient and may end up "missing the mark for developing a self-sustaining unit."¹²⁹ Logisticians responsible for operational planning have the capability to create informed analysis of their warfighting function not only for American forces, but also their partners, which allow informed recommendations as to the status of partnered forces.

¹²⁷Tabarez, 221-222.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

Advisors should also temper their expectations of partnered forces, and balance the need to create a self-sufficient force with the benevolence of doing it themselves. When advisors simply monitor FSF progress without inculcating analysis of what the FSF can do themselves, they “play a strong role in generating and sustaining failure.”¹³⁰ Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq proved that having realistic expectations is crucial. Early in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the secretary of defense was concerned that “in our zeal to accomplish the mission, we would try to do everything ourselves and not allow the Iraqis to gain the experience they would need to ultimately take charge.”¹³¹

As history has demonstrated, officers who make better advisors have been able to avoid stoic adherence to one-size-fits-all mentalities, and are able to acknowledge that every situation is different. The advisor should seek to “aim to solve particular problems in local contexts” and avoid adherence to “preconceived and packaged best practice solutions,” which is counter to the mindset of many.¹³² The inculcation of this ability relies upon properly selecting advisors for the duty.

Within the manning systems of the military, mechanisms must exist to ensure we are training the right advisor. Advising is about interactions between military professionals; if advising a foreign partner is important, properly incentivizing the duty is critical to ensure the military is placing the right advisor in the right duty. Each interested agency and department must work to find the advisor that can “thrive in austere conditions, can rapidly assimilate all facets of

¹³⁰Lant Pritchett, Michael Woolcock, and Matt Andrews, “Capability Traps in Development: How Initiatives to Improve Administrative Systems Succeed at Failing,” *PRISM* 3, no. 3 (June 2012): 72.

¹³¹George W. Casey, Jr., *Strategic Reflections: Operation Iraqi Freedom, July 2004–February 2007* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2012), 13.

¹³²Pritchett, 73.

the operational environment, and who possesses the interpersonal skills to foster close relationships (usually over an extended time period) with host nation counterparts.”¹³³

Integration

Integration, as a principle of sustainment, is the “combining all of the sustainment elements within operations assuring unity of command and effort.”¹³⁴ Logisticians are expected to ensure that effects are complimentary and reinforcing to other services and our joint and multinational partners where possible. One method in which we interact with other organizations that offers the most potential for improvement of SFA contributions is the integration of special operations and general purpose forces, which could serve as another mechanism to improve advisory effectiveness in the long term through the broadening of experiences and capabilities. Each component brings something unique to the mission, one construct could be when conventional forces train basic skills and after a maturation has taken place, special operations forces would continue developing the FSF on more advanced training at various levels, at which time the next step might be “sustainment training via large-scale multinational exercises shepherded by American GPF. A continuing SOF-GPF dialogue is beneficial throughout the capacity-building process.”¹³⁵

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusion

The increasing desire to interact with other nations on friendly terms will likely persist for the near term, displayed by emphasis in strategic guidance such as the 2014 *Quadrennial*

¹³³Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Planners’ Guide*, i.

¹³⁴Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 4-0, 1-2.

¹³⁵Germanovich, 18.

Defense Review. Our government works with others for myriad reasons including political, economic, and military improvements; cooperation in this manner can “establish transnational networks that enhance a country’s soft power,” hopefully preventing the future use of hard power.¹³⁶ Defense policy currently embraces the idea that building and maintaining partnerships is critical to national security.

The *Quadrennial Defense Review* frames current defense strategy within three strategic pillars: (1) protect the homeland; (2) build security globally; and (3) project power and win decisively.¹³⁷ The ability to build partner capacity directly contributes to the building of global security, and indirectly contributes to the other two pillars. SFA is a method to bolster legitimate government and military forces to “influence the security environment, build trust, develop relationships, and gain access.”¹³⁸ Simply put, partnership with FSF and teaching them to sustain themselves are a series of tactical actions that work to achieve strategic objectives, which has potential to produce lasting effects rather than fleeting impressions.

This paper was initiated to research how American military trainers incorporated sustainment training into building partner capacities, and if previous SFA efforts provided relevant lessons for future tactical and operational efforts. The original hypothesis of this paper was that efforts to build partner capacity historically only included sustainment training in a limited fashion. The research reflected in this paper partially disproves that idea; historical cases show a consistent intention to create self-sustaining partners, but efforts are often stymied by inability to work through distractions to self-sufficiency such as culture, conflict, and time

¹³⁶Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), 86.

¹³⁷Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government, Department of Defense, 2014), 12.

¹³⁸Odierno, 6.

available. The desire to inculcate sustainability into partner forces is not a new or fleeting idea, American advisors have understood a requirement for this at varying levels in our past efforts.

This paper also hypothesized that American doctrine did not provide a framework to help tactical advisors teach sustainability. This research proved that while doctrine does not provide a specific checklist or procedure to follow, but there are useful mechanisms available to the advisor for ensuring their efforts progress to formation of a self-sustaining partner. Current doctrine and various staff planning guides, including JCISFA's *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance* and associated *Planners' Guide*, Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, Army Doctrine Publication and Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-07, and Field Manual 3-07.1, all provide a framework to incorporate sustainment into building partner capacity. New mechanisms are not needed; reliance upon and improvement of existing bodies of work is sufficient.

Future Research

The study of war and warfare is an eternal human endeavor. Given a recent emphasis on analyzing the prevention of war and not simply the preparation and conduct for warfare, contributions from a military perspective should serve useful to the evolving body of knowledge regarding conflict prevention. The idea that SFA takes place in all phases of an operation, in contrast to relegation to post-conflict operations, is reflected in DOD and Army planning guides. A growing body of scholarly work also emphasizes this point, such as Paris and Sisk's, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*, which outlines that: "for these strategies and missions to produce more sustainable results, they need to be viewed not simply as 'post-conflict' operations, but rather as the first of many phases of international engagement."¹³⁹ As a practical application of American foreign assistance, SFA operations continually evolve in scope, scale, and audience; how these missions are allocated

¹³⁹Paris and Sisk, 313-314.

globally and what desired effects they can realistically achieve in the prevention of conflict is worthy of continued research. To do this, the differences between teaching self-sufficiency during a conflict prevention phase and in a post-conflict environment (often referred to as nation-building) would better inform as to the appropriate uses of the military element of national power within the security assistance realm. The time for this research is right given the conclusion of conflict in Iraq and an apparent drawing down of conflict in Afghanistan; two conflicts that readily show the difficulties of combat advising and a subsequent transition towards nation-building in a manner which displays the difficulties of creating a sustainable FSF.

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